

SAFER AT HOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do Safer at Home precautions differ from last week's order that banned dine-in eating at restaurants and closed bars, gyms and commercial event venues?

The Knox County Health Department's March 23 Safer at Home Order, supported by Knoxville Mayor Indya Kincannon and Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs, covers many more activities. Safer at Home directs the closure of all non-essential businesses to lessen the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, whereas Mayor Kincannon's earlier order only required closures of restaurants, bars, gyms and commercial event venues.

Additionally, Safer at Home urges Knox County residents, including those who live in the City of Knoxville, to work from home and stay at home unless you are doing a designated "essential activity."

Even then, if your work or an essential activity requires you to leave your home, always stay at least 6 feet away from other people. And limit your activities by consolidating them. For example, buy groceries once a week. Avoid unnecessary trips.

What are some of the legally-mandated dos and don'ts?

You should work at home if possible, and not go into work, until April 6, 2020, unless you are providing an essential service, as specifically defined by Knox County's March 23 Safer at Home order.

Daycare and childcare business will remain open, but they are urged to prioritize care of children of parents working in essential services.

Residents can still go to the grocery store or a convenience store. You can gas up your vehicle, or get a flat tire repaired or car engine serviced. You can make financial transactions at your bank. These businesses and more will remain open. (See a more complete listing below.)

While restaurants are closed for dine-in services, take-out, delivery and drive-through options are allowed.

"Personal appearance" businesses, like hair salons and tattoo parlors, are directed to close.

SAFER AT HOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

In-home businesses are not affected by the order, provided that business functions are only performed by residents of the home.

Check with your doctor first, but if the medical provider recommends it, you can go to medical appointments. Pharmacies will remain open.

You can care for a friend or family member, or deliver food and supplies to someone in need.

But remember that Gov. Bill Lee on Sunday issued a statewide Executive Order that limited visits to nursing homes, retirement homes and long-term care and assisted-living facilities to those involving essential care only. Elderly persons and those with underlying health issues are most at risk of life-threatening COVID-19 illness.

What are “essential activities”?

These are essential activities, as specified by the Knox County Safer at Home Order:

- Federal and state offices, as well as private companies and individuals performing work through federal, state and local contracts;
- Essential Knox County and City offices and services, including law enforcement, public transportation and functions that assist people who are economically disadvantaged and individuals experiencing homelessness;
- Companies providing media, communication and telecommunication services;
- Grocery and beverage stores, farmers’ markets, food banks, catering, convenience stores selling food, agriculture, food processing, feed mills, farming and other businesses that directly support the food supply;
- Health care, mental and behavioral health, and biomedical research and businesses that directly support the healthcare industry, including health information technology, staffing and supplies;
- Sanitation and waste removal businesses and services;
- Energy, water, and sewage businesses and services;

SAFER AT HOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Pharmacies and medical supply businesses, and other businesses that directly support the drug and medical supply pipeline;
- Vehicle fuel, support and service stations, vehicle parts and repair businesses, and vehicle sales, leasing and rental businesses;
- Banks, savings and loans, insurance companies, accounting businesses, and other business that directly support the insurance and financial services sector;
- Real property marketing, leasing, purchase and sales services;
- Legal and judicial services;
- Laundromats and laundry and cleaning services;
- Home and business structure and equipment repair, hardware, building supply, and appliance sales and repairs;
- Warehousing and storage facilities;
- Construction, architectural, engineering and surveying services;
- Product logistics, transport, and distribution businesses;
- Parcel transportation and delivery businesses;
- Veterinary and pet supply business and services;
- Home and business cleaning and maintenance services;
- Educational institutions;
- Landscaping and nurseries;
- Production, distribution and sales of household consumer goods, such as cleaning and personal care products;
- Essential building maintenance and security;

SAFER AT HOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Individuals whose jobs require them to be at their work location and who are essential to preserving the information systems, accounting and human resources infrastructure of any business that is otherwise in substantial compliance with the order; and
- Non-profit entities providing support and assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you're unsure whether an activity, business or service is deemed essential, go to www.cisa.gov/identifying-critical-infrastructure-during-covid-19.

Or call 311 or you can also contact your legal counsel.

Why is this necessary now? How long will the Safer at Home order remain in effect?

Most people have probably heard by now about “flattening the curve.” The Safer at Home public-safety steps are necessary to slow the spread of the Coronavirus and COVID-19 and prevent a rapid spike in the number of people getting sick at the same time. In some U.S. cities and around the world, the quick spread has overloaded health care resources.

The Safer at Home order remains in effect until April 6, 2020. However, conditions are rapidly changing, so the City's and Knox County's protective actions may also change. Visit www.KnoxvilleTN.gov/COVID19 for updates on what's happening inside the City limits.

What if I become sick – when and how should I seek treatment?

Do not go to the emergency room unless you have an actual medical emergency. If you feel sick, please first call your doctor, a nurse-care hotline or an urgent care center. Do not show up unannounced; you could spread the Coronavirus to other patients and medical providers. By calling ahead, clinics and providers can take necessary precautions if they advise you to come in, or they may direct you to another facility.

If you don't have a doctor, call the Knox County Health Department information line: 865-215-5555.

SAFER AT HOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Knox County Health Department is the lead authority on public health policy. Visit their website as well – www.knoxcounty.org/health/coronavirus.

Are any special accommodations being made at the businesses and services that are open?

The essential services and activities listed above may continue as long as appropriate social distancing is practiced whenever possible. For example, businesses will adhere to CDC guidance hand hygiene in the workplace, and employees and customers must be 6 feet apart. All employers, including those deemed as offering essential services, should take common-sense protective measures. For example, they may allow employees to work on-site in shifts to optimize social distancing in the workplace.

The City of Knoxville has made workplace accommodations to protect its employees and residents, and some employees are working remotely. All City offices are open.

All essential services, especially grocery stores and pharmacies, are to make efforts to establish hours when they will exclusively be available only to senior citizens or otherwise vulnerable populations.

What about hotels? Are they open?

Hotels will remain open, but they must discontinue entertainment or dining services in restaurants or group settings. Pick-up and room-service food services may continue.

Housing and rental services may continue, but agents should practice social distancing, host no open houses, and no groups larger than 10 people are allowed.

Can I walk in a City park, on a greenway or in my neighborhood?

Yes. Walking, riding your bike, hiking, jogging, exercising, walking your dog and connecting with nature are all encouraged. Just follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines – don't do it with a group, and stay 6 feet from the friends or family members who may be joining you. Playground equipment will be closed to avoid spread of the virus on equipment surfaces, and contact sports are prohibited.

SAFER AT HOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What should I do if I think a business is in violation of the Safer at Home Order?

Call 311 as a first point of contact. The person at the City call center taking your information will report it to the appropriate agency for further investigation.

I want to help out. Who do I call to volunteer?

Volunteer East Tennessee is closely monitoring community needs related to COVID-19 and how it may affect nonprofits and volunteerism. If you're looking for ways to help, call the 211 social-services help line or go to Volunteer East Tennessee's website:

<https://www.volunteere tn.org/>

Volunteer East Tennessee asks that you NOT volunteer if you're sick or feeling unwell, been near someone who's sick, cruised or traveled within the past two weeks to any high-risk areas with known COVID-19 spread, or if you are at a higher risk from COVID-19. And avoid making physical contact and handshakes.

Also, please consider a donation to the United Way of Greater Knoxville, which has set up a Knox County COVID-19 Response Fund to support local non-profits providing critical services to those affected by the pandemic. Visit www.uwgk.org.

Are KAT buses running?

Yes. Knoxville Area Transit remains operational for essential travel. Some KAT trolley lines may be closed. Visit www.katbus.com.

To help keep yourself, other passengers and KAT vehicle operators safe, please follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines by distancing yourself from others by at least 6 feet while at a bus stop, boarding and riding the bus.